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Kearsarge Regional School District



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Man Shares Love of Chess with Kearsarge Regional Elementary School Students Over Last Thirteen Years



Chess Club Coach Gene Tappen helps fourth grade students Kelby Frenkiewich (left) and Jack Glidewell (right) during their game at a recent meeting. (Photo courtesy of Kearsarge Regional School District)

NEW LONDON -- For over a decade, a local man has been sharing his love of chess

with students at Keasarge Regional Elementary School.

Gene Tappen launched the club in 2007 after he retired and moved to New London. He taught himself how to play when he was 10 years old and has actively played for the last 65 years.

"When I was in the Navy I would play Chess all the time when I was deployed, it would help pass the time," Tappen said. "I started playing in tournaments just seven or eight years ago."

Tappen started the club because of his passion for the game and his desire to share that with students.

A former New York City high school gym teacher, Tappen has been impressed at the skills he's seen from the young players throughout the years.

"In one of my first tournaments, I played a seven year old girl. On the 18th move, I said 'You win!', she was that good," he said. "At age 10, that same girl beat a grandmaster at his own game."

The club meets four times a month, on the second and third Tuesday, and the fourth and fifth Thursday. During the first few meetings, Tappen will teach kids how to play. After that, students pair up and play against each other for 45 minutes.

"I like playing chess because I get more experience playing it and getting better," said New London fourth-grader Kelby Frenkiewich.

The amount of students varies each week, with anywhere from eight to 20 students attending. The club is for students from first to fifth grade at the elementary school.

"I like coming to chess club for two reasons - I get to stay here after school with my friend and also learn to play chess," said New London fourth-grader, Jack Glidewell.

For Principal Kelly Collins, the club has become an integral part of the school and a great way to teach students skills for life.

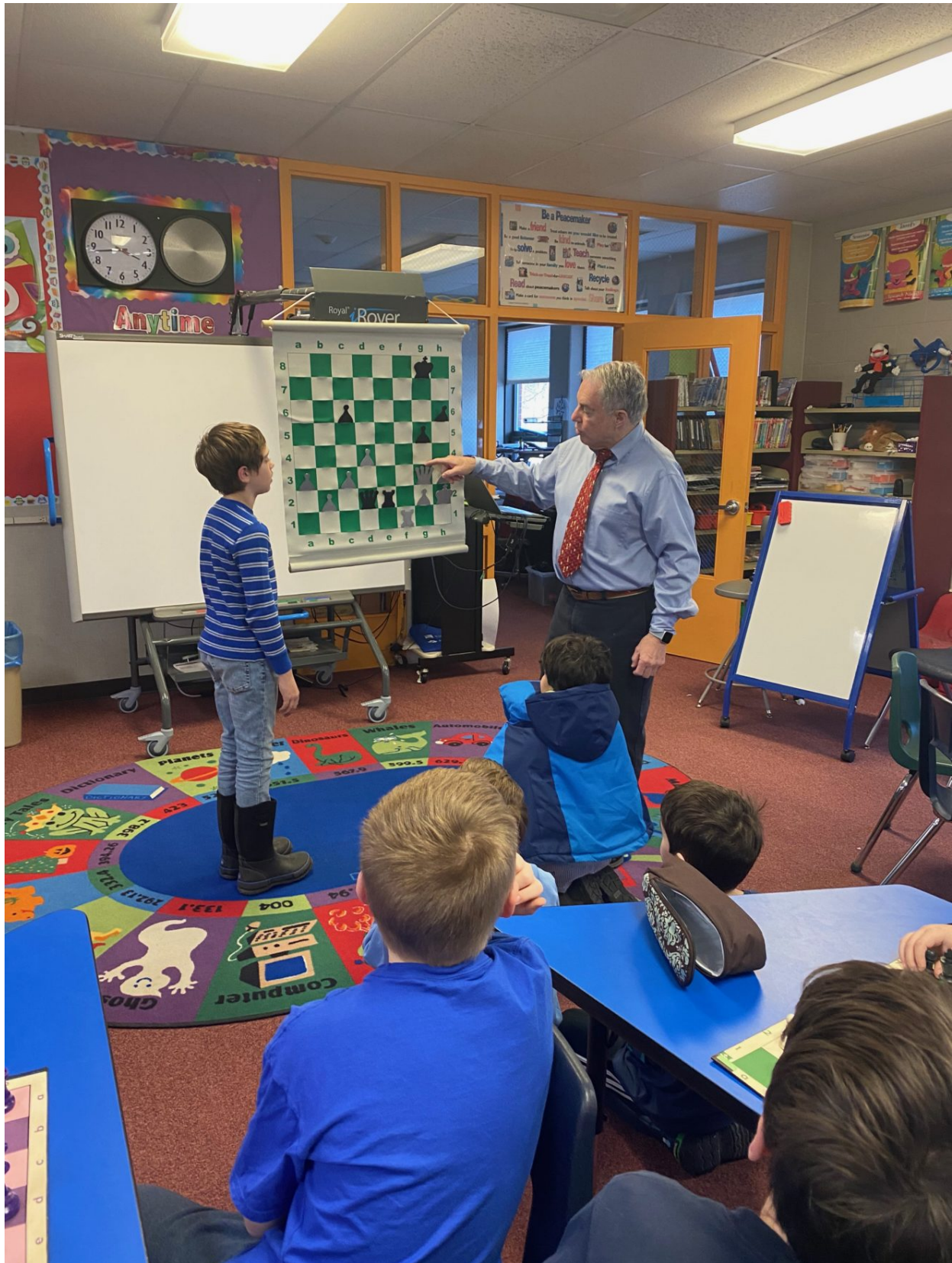
"His dedication and commitment to our students is unparalleled," Principal Collins said. "Students who participate in chess with Gene benefit from so many valuable life lessons, like learning how to win and lose, and developing problem-solving skills. We

are so fortunate to offer this after school program and to have Gene volunteer his time throughout the school year."

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Some of Tappen's own unique chess sets are on display at the school. (Photo courtesy of Kearsarge Regional School District)



Tappen starts off the year by teaching students how to play chess. (Photo courtesy of Kearsarge Regional School District)

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